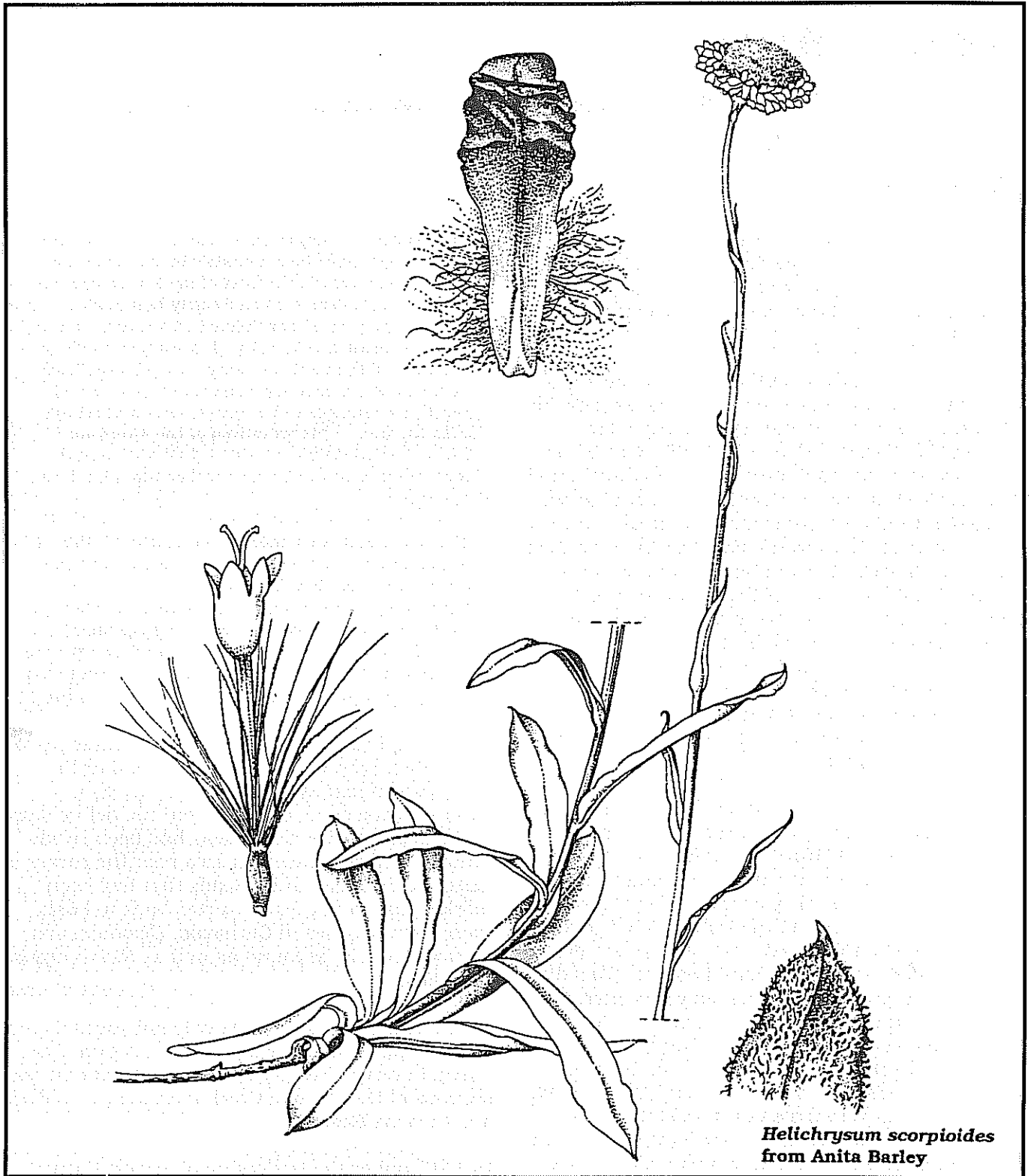


INDIGENOTES



Helichrysum scorpioides
from Anita Barley



"You should have asked us 15 years ago"

Attempts to preserve native flora in the City of Waverley, Victoria

By Alf Salkin*

Esma and I first came to live in Mount Waverley in 1960. At this stage of its "development", housing was just beginning to make noticeable inroads into the mosaic of bush, orchards, and market gardens.

Soon after settling into our - or to be more accurate, the bank's - house, we joined the Society for Growing Australian Plants and shortly after formed the Waverley Group of SGAP. One of our first field trips was a survey of the local bush, and with advice from the National Herbarium Vic. we collected numbered duplicate specimens. One set was sent to the herbarium who sent us back a list of numbers with the identification of the specimens. I still have most of these specimens, among them species we were not to see in the district again. One of the best areas was the golf course at the corner of Waverley and Blackburn Roads; apart from a great variety of pea plants and *Tetratheca ciliata* it had a very extensive orchid flora, most of the orchids on the plant list could be found there.

As well as joining the SGAP we also joined the Native Plant Preservation Society which at that time was run by "Winnie" Waddell. Winnie was then in her 60's. I well remember going with her to look at a particularly good area of native vegetation on the south side of the railway line between Syndal and Glen Waverley. We managed to get this set aside as a Native Plant Reserve. This did not however protect it. Some ten years later, without warning the fence was removed, the area graded and sown with grass, for what reason is beyond comprehension. The area has been invaded by weeds and the narrow strip that was left even today has remnants of the bush they destroyed. Had they left the whole lot it would have been self sustaining and maintenance free. Now they have to keep it mowed.

In those days we had verbal battles with the council over retaining small areas of local bush. A letter published in the local newspaper Progress Press gives some idea of the mood of the time:

"Dear sir,
One can not help but feel cynical at Councillor Allen's remarks, as reported in the 3rd of March 1970 issue of the Progress Press, that if conserva-

tion bodies had approached the Council 15 years ago it might have been possible to set aside wild-flower reserves. To the best of my knowledge the Native Plants Preservation Society has made repeated requests over the past 20 years for areas to be set aside in Waverley. I know personally of the work of the past secretary, Miss Winnie Waddell, one of our pioneer conservationists. I well recall her remarks of her encounters and rebuffs with the then representatives of the Mulgrave Shire. No doubt she was then told she should have been around 15 years earlier when land was cheaper.

There is perhaps a sobering thought in all this - it seems to be a world-wide phenomenon. We are always too late. Too late to save the life in the Great Lakes, too late to save the Great Barrier Reef. Too late to save ourselves from the total pollution of our environment. When if ever will we begin to ask ourselves the question - if it costs too much today, what is it going to cost in the future?"

The council in the 1970s was mainly made up of orchardists who were selling their land or the purveyors of real estate who were buying it. Gradually the ethos changed, but not before some of the prime native plant areas had been subdivided. I well remember an area near the corner of Jells and Ferntree Gully Roads that had been market garden and had reverted back to bush, there were swathes of *Glossodia*, *Dipodium* and *Gastrodia* could be found as well as *Ricinocarpus pinifolius*.

By the end of the 1970s the only substantial areas left were an area in the Bushy Park region, The Valley Reserve, Damper Creek, the derivation and sections of Dandenong Creek including Jells Park and Nortons Reserve.

In 1977 under the leadership of Rupert Barnett a study group whose subject was the local flora was formed in the Waverley Group of the SGAP. It appeared that many members were growing the local forms of plants and the purpose of the study group was to monitor the performance of species being grown and to bring as many species as possible into cultivation. The study group was called FLOWA, an acronym for the Flora of Waverley. It was a fairly loose group with occasional meetings and reports in the local SGAP newslet-

ter. One of the first important things that we did was to delegate members to monitor remnant patches of vegetation to collect seed and cuttings and make plant lists. In 1978 we began a series of articles on the flora of waverley and these articles are still part of our bimonthly Waverley Group newsletters.

In 1981 I had a call from a gentleman who identified himself as a local and a member of the Bird Observers Club. "What" he asked, "are you doing about the Valley Reserve?". His concern was that if something wasn't done soon there would be little natural vegetation left and consequently no birds other than introduced ones for him to observe. I thought about this for some time and remembered the Organ Pipes where a group of people had worked to restore the natural vegetation of an area dominated by giant thistles. So the Friends of the Valley Reserve was formed. The Waverley Council showed interest and offered to help us in any way they could. Work parties were on the last Saturday of each month from 1.30 to 4 and we had a core of eight people which was supplemented by scouts of various sorts as well as other casual helpers. Very early in our endeavours we realized it would be important to get local people on side so we produced a pamphlet explaining what we were doing as well as a 28 page booklet entitled The Valley Reserve - Plants History Birds. This contained a plant list of nearly 170 species and a bird list with details of 70 birds seen in the reserve.

As well as weeding the reserve using a modified Bradley Method a programme of propagation was begun with seed and cutting material collected in or near the reserve.

Initially we had trouble with council's policy on mowing, a problem we solved by wiring down logs to steel stakes driven into the ground. A member who was a plumber provided us with a source of steel pipe. He was also a member of the Orchid Society and reproduced tubers from local orchids to place in the reserve.

The wired down logs only protected the richest area. Eventually we persuaded the council to delay mowing areas of good native grassland until mid January so that we could collect seed of

Chocolate Lillies. This had some appeal to the council as they had recently made *Dichopogon strictus* the floral emblem of Waverley. Eventually we were lucky enough to have a new person in charge of mowing, a local, a recent graduate from Oakleigh Tech, who had similar ideas to the Friends. He took the step of leaving large areas unmown.

At present we are still continuing with our programme of weeding and planting and have recently applied for two grants for assistance. We need to fence off the richest area which gets heavy traffic. Work will have to be done on paths and assistance is required with a programme of spraying some of the more difficult weeds such as Honeysuckle, *Watsonia*, Willows, *Coprosma*, and other less tractable weeds.

Looking back on the 30 years of involvement with attempts to preserve local flora I can't help feeling a tremendous sense of loss, there was so much in what Walter Burley Griffin called "the cleanest most delicate and varied native ligneous evergreen perpetually blooming flora extant". He went on to say "For these reasons no vegetation could be better to live with, free as it is of rank growths, brambles, nettles burrs, weeds or plants seasonably untidy. Moreover it will persist through drought without watering and recover from abuse without help provided the peculiar nature of the soil is respected and manure with exotic seed is kept out".

He was talking about his housing development in the 1930s at CastleCrag near Sydney, and whilst this may have been true of NSW heaths at that date it certainly is no longer true in Victoria where undisturbed bush is being invaded by environmental weeds such as *Pittosporum undulatum*.

The task before us is one of monumental proportions, but there is now a perceptible change of attitude even in the corridors of power. Whether this is more due to Greenhouse or the pressure from the conservation movement is open to debate but I for one welcome this long awaited renaissance after an interminable dark age.

*38 Pinewood Drive, Mt Waverley Victoria 3149.

A review of some of CFL's Budget promises 1989-90

By Peter Tucker†

Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands (CFL) has published its budget program for this financial year. A review of it reveals some excellent initiatives and some sad oversights.

The Minister's introduction to the document claims an 11% increase in dollar terms in the appropriation for CFL over the 1988-9 year. The major program of the Department - the Land Resource Management Program - has an increase of 10.7%. Not a large increase when inflation is taken into account.

The Wetlands and Wildlife Reserves subprogram received the greatest increase to its budget of all the subprograms - 66% or some \$2 million, allowing the setting up of the Wetlands Unit. Specific initiatives include \$220,000 for restoration works, roading, education and research to conserve the western wetlands between Melbourne and Geelong. A welcome move as these coastal and adjacent wetlands have international and national significance. Wetlands in salt-affected areas will receive \$280,000 to help combat salinity while enhancing wetland systems. Wetlands database development, and assessment, land purchase and land management processes and guidelines will continue.

The National Parks subprogram - funding for national parks, state parks, wilderness areas and other reserves listed in the schedules to the National Parks Act - received an increase of some \$12 million, or 57.1%. With recent increases in land area managed under this program (the huge Alpine National Park for example), such a large increase seems appropriate, however the bulk of the increase (\$8.83 million) was allocated to purchase the remaining 270 ha of Green's Bush, to be added to the Point Nepean National Park. It's unfortunate that the purchase was left so late so that the price escalated so much. Taking this extraordinary sum into account, the increase in this programme is only 15%. Hardly enough after inflation is taken into account to keep up with the huge increases in land area involved.

Of great interest is that an environmental weeds strategy has been planned for all parks and public land. "Priorities for activities in 89-90 are the Dandenong Ranges National Park, the You Yangs, French Island and Angahook-Lorne State Parks." I commend CFL on this action and hope that the

strategy document is open and available for public perusal and comment.

Barimah State Park, South Gippsland Marine and Coastal Parks, Angahook-Lorne State Park, Mount Worth State Park, French Island State Park and the Dandenong Ranges National Park will have "revegetation and environmental works" carried out. This seems a very short list compared to the number of parks needing such works, however it is good that these ones are getting some work. I trust that local species of local provenance will be used and placed in their correct ecological context to help maintain and enhance these ecosystems.

The Flora and Fauna program received an increase of \$1 million, or 12%. \$1.2 million is provided to continue implementation of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. As part of this amount, \$200,000 is for land purchase and compensation, enough to buy ... not very much really. \$50,000 is for research into the effect of lead shot accumulation in waterfowl and their habitat. This seems a lot of money when the hazards of lead are well known, and other countries have already taken the step of banning lead shot. \$200,000 is provided for an endangered species management program for research into Leadbeaters Possum and its habitat. Ironic when the main threat to the Possum is the very same Department. \$250,000 is allocated for a captive management and breeding program for the Helmeted Honeyeater. Let us hope that there is enough genetic diversity within the population to allow the species' survival and potential for evolutionary development.

Funds have been allocated for floristic surveys of grasslands in outer Melbourne area and for the development of a Grasslands Strategy to assess options for "cost effective" conservation of grasslands. 99% of grasslands have been destroyed. They are more vulnerable to extinction than rainforests. Every effort must be made to reserve them.

The fire protection subprogram includes an upgrading of region's efforts to review fire protection plans by a process that includes a public participation process and consistency with statewide standards. Perhaps herein lies a chance for native grasses and their associated herb flora.

Other programs include initiatives relating to

Native Grasslands

By Jamie Pittock*

native forests, hardwood and softwood plantings, land protection and restoration, and fisheries management.

On the whole, the CFL's budget program contains some excellent initiatives, but still reflects an unwillingness of the State Government to commit adequate funds to conservation management.

† 2/81 Alexandra Avenue, South Yarra, Victoria 3141.
*Supplementary Program Information 1989-90,
Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, August
1989. Available from the Dept of CFL, 240 Victoria
Parade, East Melbourne 3002.

Victoria's Inland Waters

Victoria's inland waters - its rivers and streams, lakes and wetlands - have undergone major changes over the past two hundred years. Most of the major rivers have been dammed, their catchments altered and wetlands drained. Few of the State's aquatic environments remain unaffected by human activity.

The impact on the State's aquatic plants and animals has been dramatic. For example:

- Two native fish are extinct in Victoria, and 31 of the remaining 44 species are threatened.
- Most of the State's riverbank vegetation has been severely affected by clearing for agriculture or urbanisation.

The quality of river water throughout much of the State is degraded through the impacts of erosion and increasing salinity.

Yet, while we strive to achieve environmentally sustainable development, relatively little monitoring of these conditions occurs.

The 1988 State of the Environment Report on *Victoria's Inland Waters* provides the first comprehensive audit of the State's aquatic environments, using available data and identifying those areas where additional monitoring is required.

Victoria's Inland Waters is a resource document which provides both a picture and assessment of the quality of Victoria's aquatic ecosystems.

Copies are available from **Information Victoria**, 318 Lt Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Clearing controls on native vegetation introduced on 22 November 1989 are a big boost for protection of native grasslands, provided sites are known and not surreptitiously bulldozed, or grazed. However some groups, such as the Shire of Lillydale, are pushing to have grasslands exempted. The State Government deserves to be supported for implementing these long overdue controls.

On the other hand the State Government continues to talk about acquiring sites with no action eventuating. Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, Kay Setches, visited sites in the northern suburbs including Cooper Street recently, but no decision on its future has yet been publicised. In December the Ministry of Transport auctioned railway land adjacent to the Evans Street site in Sunbury rather than undertaking a land swap to enable the preservation of the Evans Street site. A 20 ha site on the Williamstown Rifle Range is proposed for sub-division in April. Meanwhile no action is being taken by Conservation Forests and Lands to identify sites outside the Melbourne Region.

Bob McDonald and Darcy Duggan are working on an innovative proposal to protect native vegetation - Conservation Price Land. CPL involves valuing a site by the number and significance of native species, with deductions for weeds. Tax write-offs are then given for management and restoration of registered land. Rates and subsidies would be incentives for landowners to protect their native vegetation. More information to follow.

A Grasslands Campaign Officer, Jamie Pittock, has been employed to work in co-operation with IFFA, Conservation Council of Victoria, Victorian National Parks Association, and other groups. Jamie can be contacted at the Victorian National Parks Association office on 654 6843.

What you can do:

- write to the Premier, John Cain, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne 3002. Ask when his government will actually acquire and protect native grasslands.
- come to the grasslands Working Group Meeting.
- help the campaign: Jamie needs office help, photographs, sponsorship, and information. Call me on 654 6843 if you can help!

* Victorian National Parks Association, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

COMING EVENTS

JANUARY

27 Sat 1.30 pm. **Moorooduc Quarry Reserve** project day, picnic reserve. Mount Eliza Association for Environmental Care. Melways 106 A7, meet at Two Bays Road. Contact Anne Read (03) 787 2034.

27 Sat 2 pm. **Friends of Sherbrooke Forest** project afternoon. Ridge Track area, approaching from the south. Ivy, asparagus, you-name-it-its-there. Bring gloves and weeding equipment. Meet at Micawber Park (Melways 75 G7), behind the restaurant. Contact Margaret Finger (03) 754 3548.

27-29 Sat-Mon. **Tuppall Forest camp**. Fauna Survey Group of the FNCV. Contact Lawrie Conole (03) 481 4926.

28 Sun 10 am. **MEAFEC**, see 27 Feb.

30 Tues, 8 pm. **IFFA meeting**. For details see back cover.

FEBRUARY

1 Thurs 10 am. **Friends of Warrandyte State Park propagation day**. Meet at the Depot. Bring lunch. Learn how to grow, plant or regenerate bush. All age groups. (prop. days every Thursday). Contact Ian or Margaret Burke (03) 844 1060.

3 Sat. **Friends of French Island State Park**. Bluegum Point, track making and beachcombing. Contact Des Quinn (03) 791 2315.

3 Sat. **Friends of Gellibrand Hill Park**. Contact Kerry Pratchett (03) 306 8180.

4 Sun 9-11.30 am. FOWSP regional group - **Stoney Creek Regeneration Team** activity day. Meet at the Boulevard River car park. Contact Mark Gardner (03) 844 3799.

4 Sun. General Excursion of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. **Belgrave and Sherbrooke area**. Leader: Hilary Weatherhead. Meet at Belgrave Station car park at 10.15 am. Contact Joan Harry (03) 850 1347.

4 Sun 1 pm. **Friends of Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve** activity day. McLelland Drive car park, Melways 103 C 10. Contact Leon Costermans (03) 783 5015.

8 Thurs 8 pm. **Aquatic Plants in Australia** - their morphology, taxonomy, distribution and their impact on the environment, by Helen Aston. National Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Avenue. Contact Margaret Potter (03) 29

2779.

10 Sat. **Friends of Nepean**. Start to year's program - social gathering, welcome for new members and outline of 1990 program by Ranger. Contact Bill Nicholson (059) 811 605.

10 Sat. **Friends of Dandenong Ranges National Park**. Clearing introduced species. Contact Graham Barstow (03) 758 6935 (H), 729 4333 (W).

10-11 Sat-Sun. Fauna Survey Group excursion - **"Water Rats"**. Camp, MMBW. Contact Julian Grusovin (03) 543 8627.

11 Sun 10 am. **Friends of the Yarra** working bee at Galatea Point. Contact Judy Rutherford (03) 347 2252.

14 Wed 9.30. **Friends of Sherbrooke Forest** project morning. Ridge Track, asparagus site. Meet at Ridge Track entrance (Melways 75 E5). Contact Margaret Finger (03) 754 3548.

17 Sat, 9.30 am. **Friends of Organ Pipes** work day. Meet at the workshop. Contact Rober Bender (03) 49 2413.

17 Sat. **Friends of Churchill National Park and Lysterfield Lake Park**. Contact Neal Smith (03) 873 2635.

17 Sat. **Friends of Werribbee Gorge State Park and the Long Forest Mallee** activity day. Contact Judy Douglas (053) 67 2672.

22 Mon, 9.30 am. **CFL Grassland Conservation Strategy** meeting. Kew. For further information contact Jamie Pittock (03) 654 6843.

24 Sat. Botany Group (of FNCV) excursion. **Aquatic Plants**. Possibly in Seymour area. Contact Margaret Potter (03) 29 2779.

24 Sat. **MEAFEC** See 27 Jan.

25 Sun. **MEAFEC**. See 28 Jan.

28 Wed 10 am. **Friends of the Yarra** working bee at Galatea Point. Contact Judy Rutherford (03) 347 2252.

28 Wed. **IFFA meeting**. For details see back cover.

MARCH

4 Sun 2 pm. **Friends of Sherbrooke Forest, Bird Walk with Alan Reid**. Contact Margaret Finger (03) 754 3548.

7 Wed. **Deadline for contributions for 9th Australian Weeds Conference**. Enquiries: D. W.

Snippets

Stephenson or J. W. Heap. c/o S.A. Department of Agriculture. GPO Box 1671, Adelaide, 5001, S. A., Tel: (08) 266 8333, Fax: (08) 261 4688.

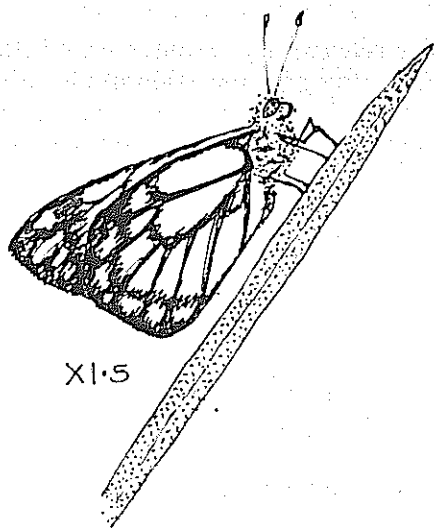
- 8 Thurs 8 pm. **Flora of Borneo and North Sumatra**, by David Albrecht. Botany Group meeting of the FNCV. National Herbarium Hall, Birdwood Avenue. Contact Margaret Potter (03) 29 2779.
- 10 Sat. **Friends of Nepean**. Work day. Meet at Seawinds. Contact Bill Nicholson (059) 811 605.
- 24 Sat. Botany Group (of FNCV) excursion. **Mountain Fruits and Trees**. Mt. Donna Buang. Leader: Hilary Weatherhead. Contact Margaret Potter 29 2779.

JULY

- 4-5 Wed-Thurs. Conference: **The Otways - Fauna and Flora - their conservation and management**. Deakin University, Geelong. Enquiries: Barbara Wilson (052) 47 1265, Martin Westbrooke (053) 33 9213.

A large range of activities such as bushwalks and "Friends" activities are published by the Victorian National Parks Association in their newsletter. For details contact V.N.P.A. (03) 654 6843.

Also, the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers welcomes participation in their many projects. These range from preserving the habitats of endangered species to combating salinity with tree plantings. For details contact A.T.C.V. (03) 583 3388.



from Andrew Paget

Clearing controls for native vegetation at last, but your support needed.

In November last year, the Victorian Government announced statewide planning controls to require a permit from the local Council to clear more than 0.4 ha of native vegetation including native grasses. Clearing of more than 10 ha will also require approval by the Dept. of Conservation, Forests and Lands. The landowner will have the normal right of appeal under the planning laws, including against CFL. This is not a ban on clearing, as clearing for legitimate needs will still take place, but rather is designed to make people and local Councils seriously consider the need for clearing. In the case of larger proposals CFL will assist in this process. IFFA joins with all other conservation groups in most strongly supporting this move.

This change, which amends the state section of all planning schemes in Victoria will bring Victoria into line with similar controls in South Australia and western NSW. It will have wide-ranging and positive implications for a number of environmental problems including salinity, soil erosion, and protection of flora and fauna. It will complement the Flora and Fauna Guarantee and Land-care projects. It is something we have hoped for for years and is a far cry from the (not so distant) days when tax relief was given for clearing.

This move in part comes from concerns on salinity by the Murray Darling Ministerial Council. The general change in community attitude towards the environment in the last year has also greatly assisted. Nonetheless this has been a bold and difficult decision by the Government, especially the immediate controls to prevent panic clearing. The community must now give these clearing controls the support they deserve.

Public submissions have been called for on these controls before mid -March and further details can be obtained in a booklet available from your local council and also from all Regional CFL, Planning and Environment, and DARA (Agriculture) offices. All members should write a supporting submission to Tom Roper, Minister for Planning and Environment, 477 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000. Even a short letter will help.

Adapted from an article by Jenny Barnett in *VNPA Newsletter*. further details in coming *Indigenotes*.

Snippets:

Commercialization agreement on Wallaby Grass seed production.

**by Ian Chivers, Technical Co-ordinator
- Turf Seeds Hodder & Tolley Pty Ltd.**

An agreement has recently been signed between the CSIRO and Hodder & Tolley Pty. Ltd. which will lead to the production and sale of seed of a CSIRO selected variety of Wallaby Grass.

Wallaby Grass (*Danthonia richardsonii*) has been the subject of an extensive research program by CSIRO over the last 4 years. It shows great promise for landscapes and other grassed areas where water is limited over summer, and where maintenance through mowing is not available on a regular basis.

It is not expected that this, as yet unnamed, variety of Wallaby Grass will be suitable for fine turf uses or for areas which receive heavy wear. It will be used widely in low maintenance turf conditions such as golf course carry areas and roughs, as an aesthetic attraction in parks, on steep slopes and batters and for roadsides where maintenance is strictly limited.

As a native grass, Wallaby Grass is adapted to the dryland areas of Australia and will survive through summer whilst still maintaining a green colour. It is also adapted to areas of low soil fertility and can retain a good grass cover without the need for regular fertilizer applications.

The use of Wallaby grass up to now has been limited by the lack of seed, however, the CSIRO project has developed a type which has all the desired characters and which also produces reasonable quantities of seed.

The agreement with Hodder & Tolley Pty. Ltd. will allow for the multiplication of the seed from very small quantities up to commercial quantities over the next three years. Seed production trials have been set up in a range of environments which will determine where seed production is best carried out. Large scale production will not be possible until 1991 while sufficient quantities of basic seed are being produced.

Some seed will be available through the offices of Hodder & Tolley in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide early in 1991 for small scale plantings. In later years larger quantities of seed should be available and the excess over Australian requirements will be exported.

Reprinted with permission from TRAI Turf Topics, Winter 1989, Vol 28, Turf Research Advisory Institute, P.O. Box 381, Frankston 3199.

Victorian Conservation Trust's Annual Report

The Victorian Conservation Trust's annual report for 1989 records a steady increase of landowners entering into conservation covenants to permanently protect private land with conservation values.

Over 3,000 hectares of land with diverse flora and fauna values have now been covenanted in Victoria and regional officers are now being established throughout country areas.

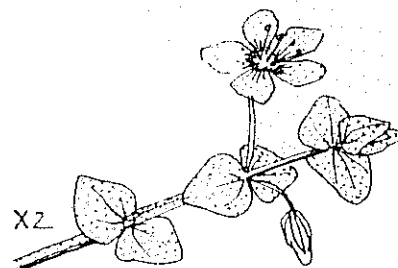
The Trust has also commenced a Supporters Group for people interested in its work and the covenanting programme in particular.

Copies of the annual report and Supporter Group leaflets are available free of charge on request from the Trust office (phone (03) 412 4661, or write to the Victorian Conservation Trust, 250 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne 3002.

Correction - quite a few trees...

The snippet "A few trees worth" in the November edition of *Indigenotes* was inaccurate. In December the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands announced that 110 community groups would share \$600,000 and selected nurseries would share \$71,000 in State Government funds from the Tree Victoria Programme. *Indigenotes* has a copy of the list of recipients, and it is impressive. They are all country groups of course, as Go Green is handling all urban tree planting grants.

Also in the press release the Minister stated that "The Government aims to have 100 million trees planted over the next 20 years, to revegetate areas of Victoria adversely affected by the removal of trees".



PIMPERNEL
**Anagallis arvensis*

from Andrew Paget

Report:

Conference on management and conservation of small populations

By John Seebeck*

The problems of survival confronting many forms of wildlife in the late twentieth century have, in most instances, their origins in the population explosion of just one species, *Homo sapiens*.

This expansion, in its many expressions, has resulted in a reduction in numbers and habitat for many species. The net result has been a change from a large, more or less continuous population, to a smaller and fragmented series of populations.

As a species' numbers become more and more reduced, and their populations become more and more fragmented, their chances of survival are lessened. Ultimately, they face extinction.

In Australia we have abundant examples of this process, and consequently a large number of wildlife species that are endangered.

But the problems are not restricted to one country or continent, and investigating the means by which endangered species may be 'managed' to prevent their extinction occupies the energy of many wildlife biologists.

New concepts, new techniques, and new tools are being developed for use in concert with traditional methods. To bring together appropriate researchers and managers, and to encourage the development of a unified framework of endangered species management and conservation it was decided to hold a conference to discuss these issues.

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot, a small marsupial which was formerly widespread in western Victoria but is now restricted to Hamilton, where its population has declined sharply in recent years, seemed to exhibit just about all the problems that could be confronted by an endangered species - an ideal model to demonstrate the application of the techniques that may be used to develop a comprehensive conservation strategy.

The Conference on Management and Conservation of Small Populations was jointly sponsored by CFL, the Zoological Board of Victoria and the

Chicago Zoological Society. It was held at the Lakeside Centre at the Melbourne Zoo in late September, and attracted about 120 participants from 32 organizations, including delegates from the United States and New Zealand, as well as from most Australian States and the ACT.

The Conference was opened by the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, Kay Setches, and, following introductory remarks by representatives of the sponsoring bodies, the Conference was introduced to the causes and consequences of species endangerment, the rise of the discipline of conservation biology to address the problems and an outline of the means available to solve them.

The invited speakers then explored established and novel concepts for conservation biology, and described the tools that can be applied to bring those concepts to a practical expression using the Eastern Barred Bandicoot as a case study. This segment was followed by a session devoted to a range of other species.

The Button Wrinklewort (a grasslands daisy), the Giant Gippsland Earthworm, the Eltham Copper Butterfly, the Australian Damsel Fly, the Helmeted Honeyeater, the Orange-bellied Parrot, and Leadbeaters Possum all share the problems of small, fragmented populations which occupy ever-reducing habitat. Specialists in these species showed how the suite of techniques available to conservation biologists and wildlife managers can be used to ensure their conservation.

A series of workshops to discuss relevant issues completed the Conference.

Proceedings of the Conference are in the process of publication, by the Chicago Zoological Society, and will be available early in 1990. Copies will be available for the cost of postage (\$6) from John Seebeck at the Arthur Rylah Institute.

* Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, 123 Brown Street, Heidelberg.

Profile

Friends of French Island State Park inc.

Friends of French Island Inc. was formed in 1984 at the instigation of Des Quinn and the VNPA. The aims of the group are:

1. To restore and maintain the natural state of French Island State Park.
2. To assist the park with special projects.
3. To arrange outings and activities for the education and enjoyment of members, their families and the general public.
4. To bring into contact people with a mutual interest in the Park with the aim of supporting the interests of the Park.

The group is involved in weed control, flora and fauna surveys, lobbying, leading walking groups, specific interest groups such as Bird Observers, Orchid Society, VNPA etc., and publicity of the Park within the community.

The Friends' main problem has been the low profile of the Park. The Island is extremely rich in flora and fauna; over 500 species of native plants including 82 orchids and 231 bird species, including the rare Orange Bellied Parrot and King Quail. However to the uninitiated it is just a sea of boggy green scrub covered by a cloud of mosquitoes. Resources have been scarce and the Park is still awaiting a Management Plan. A Sites of Botanical Significance Report has been done but with no follow up. Very little mapping of the flora existed and therefore damage was being done, unknowingly by the local community and by those charged with protecting the Park.

The Friends group stepped into this gap. They had no trained Botanists and therefore no credibility with the Department. This was a major problem, however, after one major battle during which they were proved correct they are now listened to and receive co-operation from the Department.

The koala population is disease free and forms the backbone of most colonies throughout the State. On a recent count they found 189 animals however the counting is restricted by a lack of leaders and they feel the population is much larger than this figure indicates. A koala catch was completed on the 18th October conducted by Ranger staff together with support teams from the mainland. In total, 216 animals were caught - 168 adults and 48 back young. These koalas were caught over ten sites and were then relocated to Kinlake National Park, the Goulburn River area and suitable trees within the Portland region.

The Friends group had a major input into the defeat of subdivision plans on the Island by BHP and Hooker Rex in 1987/88. This was mainly due to the extensive bird surveys conducted by Des Quinn over the past 25 years. Other members of the group are involved in plant surveys and have added over fifty species to the plant list in the last three years.

The main weed of the Park is *Pinus pinaster* with about 25% of the Park being affected. The Department has done no control work at all to date, but after considerable prodding by the Friends Group and concerned individuals within the Department \$16,000 has been allocated to commence work. The eradication program will start in the near future.

There is also a *Pittosporum* problem in the Park but the Friends believe they should have these cleaned out in time - 10 years if all goes to plan. The Friends group is also pushing the Department to close all roads within the Park and hopefully all will be closed before next winter. Other weeds that demand their regular attention are Spanish Heath and Boneseed.

The FOFI volunteers come from far and wide though that does not prevent them from having excellent "ternouts" even if the weather is cold and blustery. Work is carried out in August to improve the breeding site of the Fairy Terns. The area is weeded and replenished with shellgrit ready for the Terns to make their tiny nest scrapes for breeding in October.

The Island has no council and is represented by a local Community Association. The group does not always support the Park and it is therefore important that there is a strong Park users association to counter their influences and also to lobby the Government on all matters affecting the Park. To this end the Friends have made their membership fee as low as possible (\$2) to encourage higher membership. Numbers do count.

The Friends group meets on the first Saturday of each month. If anyone would like to join the FOFI or find out more about their activities, they are welcome to contact Clive or Fay Gordes, 14/ 1a Gladesville Bvd., Patterson Lakes, 3197.

This profile is based on information provided by Clive and Fay Gordes, FOFI.

What is IFFA?

The Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association (IFFA) is an incorporated organisation dedicated to the conservation of the indigenous Australasian biota. Its members, amateurs, professionals and organisations, have diverse backgrounds including botany, zoology, ecology, horticulture, environmental management, and education.

The organization believes that conservation of plants, animals and the communities they form, must be based on sound knowledge of their biology, ecology, distribution, status and management requirements. To achieve these ends, we aim to foster a broad multidisciplinary approach, bringing together expertise from a wide range of professions which are too often independent and narrowly focussed. We believe this approach is necessary to maximise the conservation, social and economic benefits of responsible resource management.

In particular we wish to encourage participation and involvement in the important emerging disciplines of conservation and restoration biology, habitat reconstruction, revegetation and the active management of vegetation and fauna - on public and private lands.

It is a primary objective of the Association to research, collect and disseminate information concerning conservation matters to relevant agencies, groups and individuals through our well respected newsletter *Indigenotes* and through the new journal *Advances in Nature Conservation*. We also aim to participate in debate on environmental issues and help in the formation of conservation policies at the local, state or national levels.

The resources of IFFA are available to both the public and private sectors of the community to help establish appropriate conservation and management strategies.

Letters: ATCV's response

Dear sir,
With reference to the profile of the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers published in your November edition of *Indigenotes*, I would like to take this opportunity to clear up any misconceptions which may arise from the article.

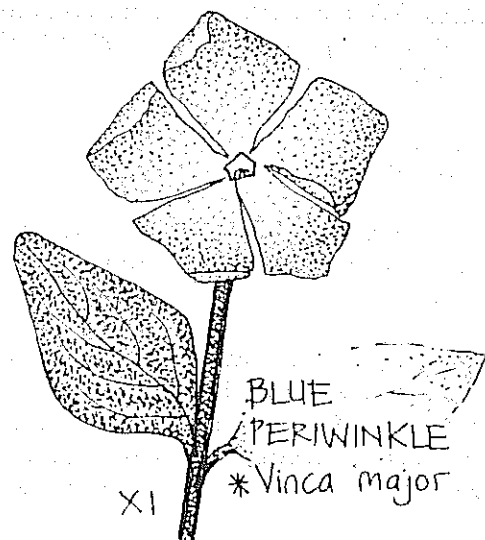
ATCV is a national, community based organization which specialised in involving Australians nationwide in practical conservation projects, of both local and national significance. ATCV is the means by which voluntary manpower can be harnessed into an effective team to undertake conservation work. ATCV is solely in the business of community involvement and offers no advice or direction on species selection or layout of planting sites, leaving this to more qualified people, like officers of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Each ATCV volunteer wears the "Working Conservationists" logo proudly on his or her T/shirt, knowing that ATCV is Australia's largest conservation group, which actually "does" something practical to improve the environment in Australia.

Less than 5% of ATCV's annual budget comes from Government funding, the remainder is raised by a fee for service charge on Landholders. Volunteers contribute \$8.00 per day to cover their food and accommodation.

ATCV is non-political, concerning itself solely with being out, getting the job done at 400 different sites, 365 days of the year.

David Clark, National President,
Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers



from Andrew Paget

